

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 1-18 are rejected.

Claims 1, 4-6, 8, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Holloway (U.S. Patent No. 6,521,248).

Claims 2, 3, 7, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Holloway in view of JP 2000-000447.

The Applicants traverse three rejections and request reconsideration.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Rejection of Claims 1, 4-6, 8 and 18 based on Holloway

The Applicants amend claim 1 to provide further clarifications.

Holloway's method is related to the fragmentation of a water structure by utilizing the effect of cavitation bubbles (repetitively forming and vanishing in an instant). Although this may be the groundwork for hydrate formation, a skilled artisan would know that this itself exhibits a completely inverse action with respect to hydrate formation.

As for micro-bubbles, as in the present invention, as bubbles shrink rather slowly, a supersaturated state, with respect to ambient pressure, is achieved around the bubbles, which promotes the generation of hydrate nuclei. This, in other words, is the promotion of ordering. This is believed to be a complete opposite effect of Holloway.

Holloway does not suggest the present invention at least because of the above-noted differences.

Claim 18 includes limitations analogous to the ones described above in relation to claim

1. Therefore, it should be patentable at least for analogous reasons.

Claims 4-6 and 8 are dependent on claim 1 and are allowable at least for the same reasons.

Rejection of Claims 2, 3, 7 and 9 based on Holloway in view of JP 2000-000447

Claims 2, 3, 7 and 9 are dependent on claim 1 and are allowable at least for the same reasons. Moreover, JP 2000-000447 does not overcome the deficiencies noted above in the teachings of Holloway. Specifically, JP2000-000447 is related to a method of producing fine bubbles by mixing water and gas so it is not related at all to generation of gas hydrates.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
U.S. Application No.: 10/790,716

Attorney Docket No.: Q79574

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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